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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2004

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Drug Discount Cards Take Effect Today

Johnson: "Seniors Can Take These Savings to the Bank"

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Seniors can now begin saving money through Medicare-approved drug discount cards, Congresswoman Nancy Johnson said today.

"Seniors can take these savings to the bank," Johnson said. "For the first time Medicare is helping seniors, especially low-income seniors, save money on the drugs they need to stay healthy. The drug card is an important first step toward making prescription drugs more affordable for seniors. But it's only a first step until the full Medicare drug benefit begins."

At a recent workshop held at the New Britain Senior Center, attendees met a 79-year-old New Britain senior who takes five prescriptions. These drugs cost her almost \$220 a month. But by using a Medicare-approved drug discount card, she saves \$63 a month, or 29 percent. Over the course of a year, she will save over \$728, minus the yearly \$30 enrollment fee.

"With the 1-800-MEDICARE hotline and its new website, Medicare provides a one-stop-shopping resource for seniors with questions about the program," Johnson added. "Never again will seniors have to call around or travel to area pharmacies to find the best prices. Now all it takes is one phone call."

Costing between nothing and \$30, these cards will offer seniors discounts ranging between 10 to 25 percent on name-brand drugs and between 40 to 60 percent on generic and mail order drugs. Nearly 90,000 seniors in the 5th District are eligible for these discounts.

- Seniors can learn which cards will save them the most money by calling toll-free 1-800-MEDICARE or going to the Medicare website, www.medicare.gov.
- Low-income seniors ineligible for Medicaid will receive a \$1,200 credit over the next 18 months to put toward their drug costs. Over 2,000 seniors in the 5th District are eligible for this cash credit.
- Seniors on ConnPACE will never pay more than their current co-pay, and in some cases they will pay less.

The discount cards take effect today and will continue offering discounts until the full Medicare prescription drug benefit takes effect on January 1, 2006. The discount card program was created by the Medicare prescription drug law.